

Issue # 1

February 7, 2007



- Senator Pappageorge was sworn in on January 1, 2007
- He succeeds Shirley Johnson, who served in the State Legislature for over 25 years
- Senator Pappageorge has served three terms in the Michigan House of Representatives

# The Monthly Minute

## With State Senator John Pappageorge

P.O. Box 30036 Lansing, MI 48909 Toll Free 1-877-SEN13th (736-1384)  
[www.senate.mi.gov/pappageorge](http://www.senate.mi.gov/pappageorge)

Dear Friend:

I couldn't be more excited to be in the Michigan State Senate representing the constituents of the 13<sup>th</sup> District, which includes: Berkley, Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills, Bloomfield Township, Clawson, Madison Heights, Royal Oak and Troy.

I would first like to recognize my predecessor, Shirley Johnson, who served over 25 years in the Michigan Legislature. Throughout her time in Lansing she was a part of many worthwhile causes including co-authoring the 1995 welfare reform bill, which required welfare recipients to find independence and self-confidence by working. She had the distinction of serving as both the first female senator from Oakland County and the first female Chair of the powerful Appropriations Committee. It is an honor to succeed such a dedicated public servant.

As the first of many monthly newsletters to come, I want to take this opportunity to outline my top legislative priorities. As we all know, replacing the Single Business Tax is an important issue. My colleagues and I in the Senate recently introduced The Business and Economic Stimulus Tax (BEST) proposal. As currently written, this legislation will stimulate economic growth, expand jobs and increase business investment while at the same time cutting the taxes of Michigan job providers by nearly \$300 million. For more information regarding the "BEST" plan, visit my website at [www.senate.mi.gov/pappageorge](http://www.senate.mi.gov/pappageorge) and look under the "News" section.

Another of my top priorities has been eliminating the current \$800 million budget deficit in a sensible way as well as balancing the 2007-2008 budget, which has projected shortfalls of an even greater amount. I am the Vice Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee and Chair of the General Government Appropriations Sub-Committee, which includes most of the executive departments and the revenues allocated to local governments, so dealing with ways to turn Michigan's economy around and thus relieving these budget pressures will be at the top of my agenda. (For a complete list of my committees turn to page 4).

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The Michigan Constitution requires that our budget be balanced every year. I will work diligently to evaluate where government is not living within its means. While many difficult decisions will have to be made to balance the budget, we must first ensure that taxpayer dollars are currently being spent carefully and in the most effective manner.

Finally, I want you to know that I am here to serve the people of the 13<sup>th</sup> District. If you have legislative concerns that I can be of assistance with, please contact my office. I believe that being an elected official is the highest non religious calling there is, and I do not take this task lightly. I hope that you will not hesitate to contact me on any issue.

Thank you for taking the time to read my newsletter. I will continue to keep you up to date on how I plan on making Michigan a better place to live and do business.

Sincerely,

John Pappageorge



Senator Pappageorge was joined by (back row from left) his wife Cristina Pappageorge, his daughter-in-law Kathy Pappageorge, son George Pappageorge, (front row from left) granddaughters Annie and Jenna Pappageorge.

## State Senator Pappageorge Takes Oath of Office

Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Clifford Taylor administered the ceremonial oath of office for incoming state senators on Wednesday, January 10, 2007. "I am honored to take the position of state senator for the 13th Senate District" said Senator Pappageorge. "I look forward to working to make Michigan a better

place to start a business, find a job and raise a family." The new group of legislators includes 21 Republicans and 17 Democrats. State senators are elected to serve a four-year term.



## Michigan Facing \$800 Million Deficit



**"It is important that government live within its means. Not only in economically tough times, but always. Tax dollars should be used carefully and effectively."**  
-John Pappageorge

According to the Consensus Revenue Estimating Conference (CREC), lawmakers will have to balance an \$800 million budget deficit for fiscal year (FY) 2006-2007, which began on October 1st, 2006. School Aid revenue is estimated to be down \$377.4 million dollars while the General Fund is down \$441.9 million. To balance the budget legislators will have to make very difficult choices. "At times like this all options must be considered, but I will always look to make government more efficient before any-

ing else" said Senator John Pappageorge. "As Vice Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I will be actively involved in finding solutions to the budget deficit. When I served as

Chair of the General Government Committee in the House of Representatives, I brought the budget in under the Governor's recommendation all four years." This kind of leadership and determination is crucial for balancing the current deficit and the FY 2007-2008 budget.

## Three State Departments Overspend



The Michigan Department of Corrections, State Police and Department of Human Services overspent their budgets for Fiscal Year 2006 with a combined total of \$69.1 million. The departments would each need a budget supplemental appropriation to pay for their over expenditures. Wednesday, January 31st, the Senate Appropriations Committee listened to testimony for over three hours from the three department heads. The commit-

tee's biggest concern was that disclosure of the departments' over expenditures was not made until months after the fiscal year ended. "The legislature must be responsible stewards of hard earned tax dollars. To do that, we must be given all necessary information in a timely manner. I will work to ensure that gross violation of trust does not occur again" said State Senator John Pappageorge. State Budget Di-

rector Bob Emerson testified that steps have been taken to prevent over expenditures in the future. While it is against Michigan's Constitution for state departments to spend more than they were appropriated, there is currently no penalty. This issue will continue to be discussed by the Senate Appropriations Committee.

## NATIONAL CONSUMER PROTECTION WEEK: Feb. 4-10, 2007

An informed consumer is the best protection against fraud and deception. Take time to learn about shopping smart and avoiding scams. Know your consumer rights and responsibilities. Visit [www.consumer.gov](http://www.consumer.gov), a one-stop online resource for consumer information. Contact the office today to get your free consumer guide.

### KEEP THIS QUICK GUIDE TO HELPFUL PHONE NUMBERS AND WEBSITES HANDY.

- ◆For advice on avoiding consumer scams and rip-offs and other consumer news, visit the Federal Trade Commission website at [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov). Report fraud online or call 1-877-FTC-HELP.
- ◆Keep up-to-date on the latest consumer alerts at the Michigan Attorney General website at [www.michigan.gov/ag](http://www.michigan.gov/ag). Report fraud or file a consumer complaint online or call 1-877-765-8388. To report Medicaid provider fraud or patient abuse, call 1-800-242-2873.
- ◆Visit the consumer section at [www.insurancefraud.org](http://www.insurancefraud.org) to learn about insurance scams and how to avoid them.
- ◆Learn how to protect your personal information, and detect fraud, scams and more at [www.mymoney.gov](http://www.mymoney.gov).
- ◆Get practical tips to guard against internet fraud at [www.OnGuardOnline.gov](http://www.OnGuardOnline.gov).
- ◆Visit [www.usps.gov/postalinspectors](http://www.usps.gov/postalinspectors) to learn about mail fraud and theft.
- ◆Stay informed about product safety news at the Consumer Product Safety Commission website at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov). Or call 1-800-638-2772.
- ◆Access the “one-stop shop” for U.S. government recalls at [www.recalls.gov](http://www.recalls.gov).
- ◆Eliminate most telemarketing calls. Sign up for the National Do-Not-Call Registry from your home phone at 1-888-382-1222 or online at [www.donotcall.gov](http://www.donotcall.gov).
- ◆Reduce your household junk mail. Remove your name from mailing lists at [www.dmaconsumers.org/cgi/offmailinglist](http://www.dmaconsumers.org/cgi/offmailinglist); or write to: Mail Preference Service; Direct Marketing Association; PO Box 643; Carmel, NY 10512.



## Contact Senator Pappageorge's Office for your Free Guides!

Whether you are interested in learning more about your state government or are looking for guidance on services you need, it is likely that we have a resource for you! We stock a number of constituent guides and will be happy to send you one. For a complete list turn to the next page.



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## **Senator Pappageorge's Committee List**

**Appropriations Committee– Vice Chair**

**Homeland Security and Emerging Technologies**

**Senor Citizens and Veterans Affairs-Vice Chair**

**Joint Committee on Administrative Rules-Chair**

**General Government Appropriations Subcommittee-Chair**

**Community Health Appropriations Subcommittee-Vice Chair**

**Joint Capitol Outlay Subcommittee**



## **List of Available Publications**

- Changes & Choices: Legal Rights of Senior Citizens
- Child Safety Coloring Book
- A Citizen's Guide to State Government
- Consumer Protection Resource Guide: Be A Knowledgeable Consumer
- Domestic Violence, Stalking, Date Rape: An Information Guide
- Drug & Alcohol Abuse: A Parent/Child Guide to Michigan Law
- For the People...By the People...
- How State and Local Governments Operate
- Getting to Know Michigan: A Coloring Book
- The Legislative Process in Michigan: A Student's Guide
- Michigan Constitution
- Freedom of Information Act
- Michigan Taxpayer's Guide
- Michigan's Friend of the Court
- Moving On: Rights & Responsibilities
- Planning for Your Peace of Mind: A Do-It-Yourself Guide to Medical & Legal Decisions
- Portraits of Michigan: History & Facts on Michigan
- Services for Seniors: Laws & Programs for Senior Adults
- Tenants & Landlords: A Practical Guide
- Veterans Benefits & Services
- Your Child: A Parent's Guide to Health & Safety
- Your State Capitol

## **Questions or Comments?**

If you have any questions or comments regarding information in this newsletter, or wish to be removed from or added to the mailing list, please contact my office at the following information:



State Senator John Pappageorge

P.O. Box 30036

Lansing, MI 48909

517-373-2523 517-373-5669 (fax)

[www.senate.mi.gov/pappageorge](http://www.senate.mi.gov/pappageorge)